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THE ART UNION

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ART UNION.

EDITED BY CHARLES M. KURTZ.

Correspondence on Art matters is respectfully solicited.

Notices of all forthcoming Exhibitions and Art Sales throughout the country are desired, as well as copies of the Catalogues of Public and Private galleries and transient Exhibitions, and reports of Art Sales.

All communications relating to the Literary Department should be addressed to CHARLES M. KURTZ, No. 44 East Fourteenth street, Union Square, New York.

All communications relating to the Business Management of the Journal, should be addressed to "Business Department, American Art Union," No. 44 East Fourteenth street, Union Square, New York.

For terms of subscription to THE ART UNION, see page 18.

VOL. I. NEW YORK, JANUARY, 1884. No. I.

EDITORIAL.

THE ART UNION.

THE ART UNION, a monthly journal, has been brought into existence by the association of artists whose name it bears, as one of the agencies by which it will endeavor to further the advancement of art knowledge and appreciation throughout the country.

It will be the official journal of the society, and the general exponent, from an artistic standpoint, of the views of artist contributors concerning the principles that form the bases of the prevailing schools.

As the Association is composed of artists whose ideas and practice of art have wide divergence, but who are yet united in one common cause—the popularization of art—there will be no official commendation or condemnation of any particular school. The journal will support only such ideas as obtain among earnest and honest artists, and will deprecate such only as these in common condemn. Its columns will, however, be open to any individual presentation of art views, except such as may be written with personal animus, which the association has no desire to encourage.

The members of the Art Union believe that, as a rule, professional artists, by means of special fitness or long study, necessarily know more about art than persons who do not possess these qualifications. They believe that the thing to be said is more important than the manner of saying it, and that the only excuse for writing about art is the desire to interpret it, and nature through it, to those who have had neither time nor opportunity to learn without such assistance—so that they may be led to seek and at last find for themselves the truth and beauty that are in nature and all good art.

A large portion of this first issue is devoted to an explanation of the objects of the American Art Union. Future issues will more fully exemplify the projected features of the publication.

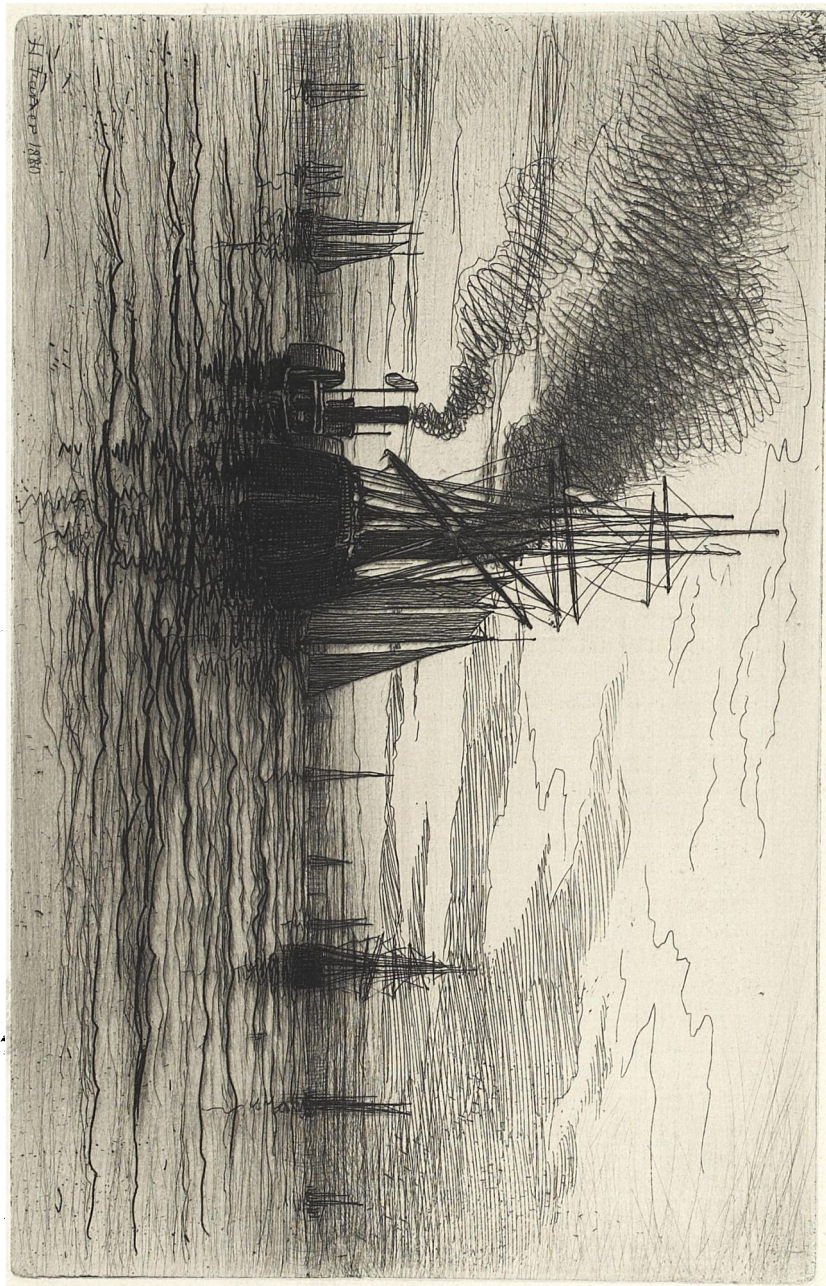
It is intended to publish:

- I. An account of the work of the American Art Union for each month.
- II. A general resume of the art events of each month.
- III. Occasional notes from the studios and galleries.
- IV. Correspondence upon art matters from various portions of the country.
- V. Correspondence from European art centers, with especial reference to the work being accomplished by American artists who are abroad.
- VI. Editorial comment upon the principal artistic topics of the time.
- VII. Descriptive and critical articles upon the various art exhibitions.
- VIII. Contributions from leading artists—technical, historical and descriptive.
- IX. Interviews with leading artists upon various topics of art interest.
- X. Illustrations of prominent pictures.
- XI. Articles on the Art Schools of America and the various methods of art teaching.
- XII. Articles on the public and private art collections of the United States.
- XIII. A list of all art exhibitions open at the time of publication.
- XIV. A list of all forthcoming exhibitions.
- XV. A list of the picture sales of each month.
- XVI. Art book reviews.

AS artists of all periods and all countries have always complained that the current criticism of their time was incompetent and inadequate, it might be supposed that, now that the artists possess a journal of their own, they might undertake to show what true criticism of pictures is, from an artistic standpoint.

In order to form the proper judgment of a picture, there should be such knowledge of Art and Nature as should enable the writer to thoroughly analyze the picture as a work of art. It is not a question of the personal like or dislike of either artist, subject, or treatment, but simply whether or not the artist is consistent with himself—if he treats his subject artistically, logically, from his own standpoint.

But there is one difficulty. As this journal is the organ of the artists whose pictures are in the Art Union's gallery—artists whose works represent many different schools, it will be impossible, obviously, to undertake any critical work in the premises, as any praise of a picture, of which even the majority might approve, might be construed as self-laudation or mutual



admiration, and any condemnation might be construed as an evidence of personal disfavor toward the artist. Therefore, the notices of the pictures will be simply descriptive, such as will give those who are unable to see them some idea of the stories they tell, with occasional hints of their composition and color.

THANKS.

The American Art Union gratefully acknowledges its obligation to Mr. D. W. POWERS, of Rochester, N. Y., for kindly loaning his painting, "The Reprimand," by EASTMAN JOHNSON, in order that THE ART UNION Etching might be made from it by WALTER SHIRLAW. Every subscriber who receives an impression of this superb etching will join with the Art Union in tendering thanks to MR. POWERS.

Messrs. D. LOTHROP & Co., publishers, of Boston, will also please accept the thanks of THE ART UNION for having generously loaned the plate for the very excellent portrait of the late MR. A. F. BELLWS, which appears in this number. It is taken from the first volume of *Our American Artists*, written by Mr. S. G. W. BENJAMIN, and published by Messrs. LOTHROP & Co.

MR. FARRER'S ETCHING SUPPLEMENT.

The Art Union is indebted to the generosity of MR. HENRY FARRER for the plate from which is printed the etching "Off Quarantine, New York," presented as a supplement with this issue of THE ART UNION. It represents a view from Staten Island, with a steamer, possibly awaiting the Quarantine officers, in the foreground, and shipping of various kinds in the distance.

THOMAS B. CLARKE'S EXHIBITION.

The exhibition of MR. THOMAS B. CLARKE'S collection of American paintings, at the gallery, No. 6 East Twenty-third street, is an interesting one, and conclusively demonstrates the fact that the intelligent American collector is not obliged to go abroad to secure good pictures. That the exhibition will be of decided advantage to American art, aside from the amount of money that may be raised through it for MR. CLARKE'S Academy Prize Fund, is undoubted. It will show a great many hitherto uninformed persons how much there is in American art that has not been fairly recognized, and that, when it is fairly represented, it lacks nothing in interest or sterling merit in comparison with exhibitions of foreign art of the same relative class.

The Art Union's Galleries, No. 44 East Fourteenth street, Union Square, are open daily—except Sunday—from nine o'clock A. M. until ten o'clock P. M.

COMMUNICATIONS.

Under this heading will be published communications relative to art matters, which may be addressed to the Editor. In each case, the name and address of the writer must accompany the contribution, though not necessarily for publication.

THE ART UNION ETCHING.

New York, Dec. 22, 1883.

To the Editor of THE ART UNION:

I have just been studying, with much gratification, Walter Shirlaw's etching after Eastman Johnson's painting, "The Reprimand." It adds another to the list of surprises, and is a new proof of the versatile power of our artists. Mr. Shirlaw, so well known as a painter, is hardly known to us as an etcher, but he has here produced a work that shows not only the sympathetic appreciation that one artist may be supposed to have for the work of a brother-artist, but also a technical knowledge of and skill in reproductive etching processes that is very remarkable. I hope that Mr. Shirlaw may be induced to give us more of such work.

The proof by Mr. Ritchie, that I have seen, is admirable, and calls for favorable comment. If we are to have good etchers we must also have good painters.

Very truly yours,

JAMES D. SMILLIE.

The following letters have been received. The first one was sent to us ten days ago; the second one arrived just in time to be included in this issue of the journal. We publish both without comments.—ED.

LETTERS FROM "A WIFE."

New York, Dec. 10, 1883.

To the Editor of THE ART UNION:—

I am an unhappy woman, and feel that I must unburden myself and denounce the Art which it is now so much the fashion to extol, but which has been the cause of all my trouble. You must know then, that after his great success, my dear husband being no longer chained behind the counter from twelve to fifteen hours a day, had for the first time in his life, some leisure hours, and receiving kind invitations from a number of the first-class dealers in art, just after we built our new house, he made their acquaintance and it was not long before the house was filled with most beautiful paintings—every one of the French school, of course, as my husband was too knowing to purchase an American picture, the colors of which we were told all fade in a few months. And I may say that his taste and judgment have been most highly commended by the gentlemen from whom he bought his collection.

For many years our home life was a very happy one; my husband was social in his habits and enjoyed entertaining his friends, to whom he was accustomed